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IMB missionary to help mobilize Hispanics

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Jason Carlisle, a Southern Baptist missionary to Uruguay since 1976, has been selected to help mobilize Hispanic Southern Baptists to meet world missions needs they are uniquely qualified to meet.

Carlisle, 47, grew up in Uruguay, where his parents, Robert and Ruth Carlisle, served as Southern Baptist missionaries for 29 years. A native of the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, Carlisle is a graduate of William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He is married to the former Susan Langston of Jackson, who is also a WCC graduate. They have two children.

Carlisle helped set up and directed the Mississippi office of partnership missions in 1981.

"Jason is a real natural for this (new) role," said Wendy Norvelle, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's (IMB) associate vice president for public relations. "Growing up as a 'missionary kid,' serving as a missionary in Latin America, he has a perspective that gifts him uniquely for this effort."

Carlisle will serve in the new position as a missionary, rather than as IMB staff, she said.

In this capacity, Carlisle will develop relationships with Hispanic leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention, identifying missions involvement needs of Hispanic congregations and providing tools and resources to help them be more effective in world missions.

The move reflects an IMB awareness of the dynamic growth of Hispanic Southern Baptist churches.

Just as the Hispanic population in the United States is growing faster than any other segment, Hispanic Baptists are increasing at a faster rate than Anglos, Asians,

or African Americans, said Raul Vazquez, language missions division director for the Florida Baptist Convention.

Language congregations in Florida are baptizing one new convert for every 11 members — twice the rate of Anglo churches in Florida and almost four times the rate of Southern Baptist churches in general.

"The U.S. Census Bureau projects that our country's Hispanic population will grow by 89 percent by 2020, while the general population will grow by 25 percent," Vazquez said. "Minority congregations in most Baptist state conventions are baptizing people at

more than 9,000 churches with at least 1 million members in Latin America, Hispanics have a destiny to fulfill in world missions, Carlisle said.

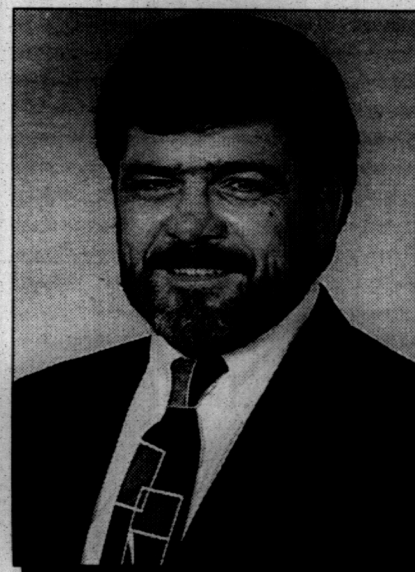
"The Latin population has a tremendous role to play in God's redemptive plan," he said. "It is no historic accident that has brought such a large concentration of Hispanics to the United States. It's part of God preparing to take the gospel to all the nations of the earth."

"There are many places in the world where Hispanics will be received by people who would not receive Anglos," he said. "God has put Hispanics in a position where they can be sent to countries and to people groups that would not be responsive to Anglos."

In his new IMB role, Carlisle is developing an initiative for Hispanic churches to adopt Hispanic Southern Baptist missionaries and become advocates for the people groups they serve. In seminars and workshops, churches will be able to learn about unreached people groups, find opportunities to join mission teams and build relationships needed for strategic world evangelization.

Carlisle also is preparing bilingual materials and translating several key IMB products into Spanish for congregations that prefer the language. Both the popular mobilization fliers and a new video produced for the 1999 Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization will soon be available to Hispanic congregations free of charge.

To contact Carlisle, call (804) 219-1725 or e-mail jason.carlisle@imb.org.



Jason Carlisle, a Southern Baptist missionary to Uruguay since 1976, has been selected to help mobilize Hispanic Southern Baptists to meet world missions needs they are uniquely qualified to meet. (IMB photo)

Women more religious, poll says

WASHINGTON(BP) — A survey of American women showed women turning more to religion and becoming more conservative. According to the Jan. 28 issue of The Washington Times, the survey commissioned by the Center for Gender Equality revealed American women's more conservative religious views influence a more conservative view on social issues. Women also believe their religious views should be part of public policy debates.

The survey showed that 36% of women agree with the recent action by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to amend its Baptist Faith and Message statement with a family article which included that wives should "submit (themselves) graciously" to their husbands' leadership. In addition 48% think society is better if men achieve in jobs and women work at home, the survey revealed.

"We find some of the finding in the report very disturbing," Faye Wattleton, director of the center, told the newspaper in a telephone conference. She cited as an example, that two in three women say the Christian Coalition's agenda will improve their lives as women.

"Women express more conservative attitudes than we had expected," she said.

"This simply affirms what we had known," Anthony L. Jordan, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and chairman of the committee which recommended the change to the SBC, told Baptist Press. "Women have been sold an empty pot at the end of the rainbow. Women are tired of being pressured into adapting to society's ways that leave them unfulfilled."

Other survey results showed: 75% of U. S. women say religion is important to them but they pick and choose the parts they like; half of all women who identified themselves as Christian said they were "born again" or evangelical.

a more accelerated rate than other congregations."

Yet there are varying degrees of maturity among Hispanic Southern Baptists in regard to their understanding of and involvement in cooperative missions, Vazquez said. While Hispanic congregations are as missions-minded as any, they have not yet realized their potential for cooperative outreach.

With about 3,600 congregations and at least 300,000 members in the United States and

Looking back

10 years ago

An independent assessment of the financial condition of William Carey College predicts that without immediate relief, the school will be hard-pressed to operate over the summer months. John Minter and Associates of Boulder, Colo. was hired to conduct the study.

20 years ago

Mississippi College (MC) is chosen as one of 25 colleges nationwide to participate in a Lilly Endowment-funded liberal arts workshop. MC is the only Mississippi school selected to participate in the project, and one of only six in the southeastern U.S.

50 years ago

W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Church, Dallas, begins revival services at First Church, Clinton on Feb. 21, 1949. Prof. E.N. Elsey leads the music. Morning services are held in the Mississippi College chapel with evening services at the church.

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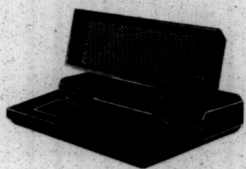
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Missrecord@aol.com

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Freeing Jesus, freeing ourselves

The Dream revisited me a few nights ago. It is the one I dread the most. There I am, as always, staring at the facade of a beautiful but nameless church. I walk up the steps. I push open the door. I go inside.

The sanctuary is dark and cold. No one's been in here for a long time. I feel the chill rising again in my spine as I hear the familiar metallic rattle I have heard so many times before, coming from the front of the sanctuary.

As I am slowly drawn toward the sound, I detect the outline of a solitary figure reclining at the base of a massive pulpit. Soon I am close enough to glimpse his face.

It is Jesus. I know it is him, because I can identify the scars on his forehead and his back and his hands and his feet and his side. I know how — and why — he got the scars.

As I rush toward him, I stumble over the heavy chains binding him to the pulpit. I fall at his feet. He helps me upright, my legs trembling uncontrollably in the presence of the Son of God.

"Master," I say, "I have searched for you everywhere. There are billions of people who need to meet you before it's too late. What are you doing all alone in this place? Come on, let's go!"

"It is not my choice to be here," Jesus replies. "I yearn to walk among my sheep in beautiful, open fields the Father has provided, but you have imprisoned me. You have chained me to this building."

"But Master," I protest, "this is a beautiful building. It was very expensive to build, and we are bursting with pride. What better home could we build for you?"

"If you knew me," Jesus says, "you would know my home is in the heart of my people, and the heart of my people is in bringing this lost world to the salvation I freely offer to everyone who will accept it."

"Yet you have imprisoned me in this place, where you expect to find me for a few hours each week, while the fields out there remain white unto harvest."

"Words cannot express my sorrow for what I have done to you, Master," I say, "I

never meant to treat you like this. Don't worry — I shall be the one to find the key and set you free!"

Then comes the terrible part.

"Do as you wish," Jesus responds sorrowfully, "but it is too late, and you had the key all the time."

Sometimes The Dream fades to black at this point. Sometimes it ends with a cry of agony as I realize what I have done. Sometimes I awaken to pace the bedroom floor.

However, The Dream ends, I am always left to ponder the realization that I have been party to holding Jesus back as he seeks to bring a lost world to the Father through himself.

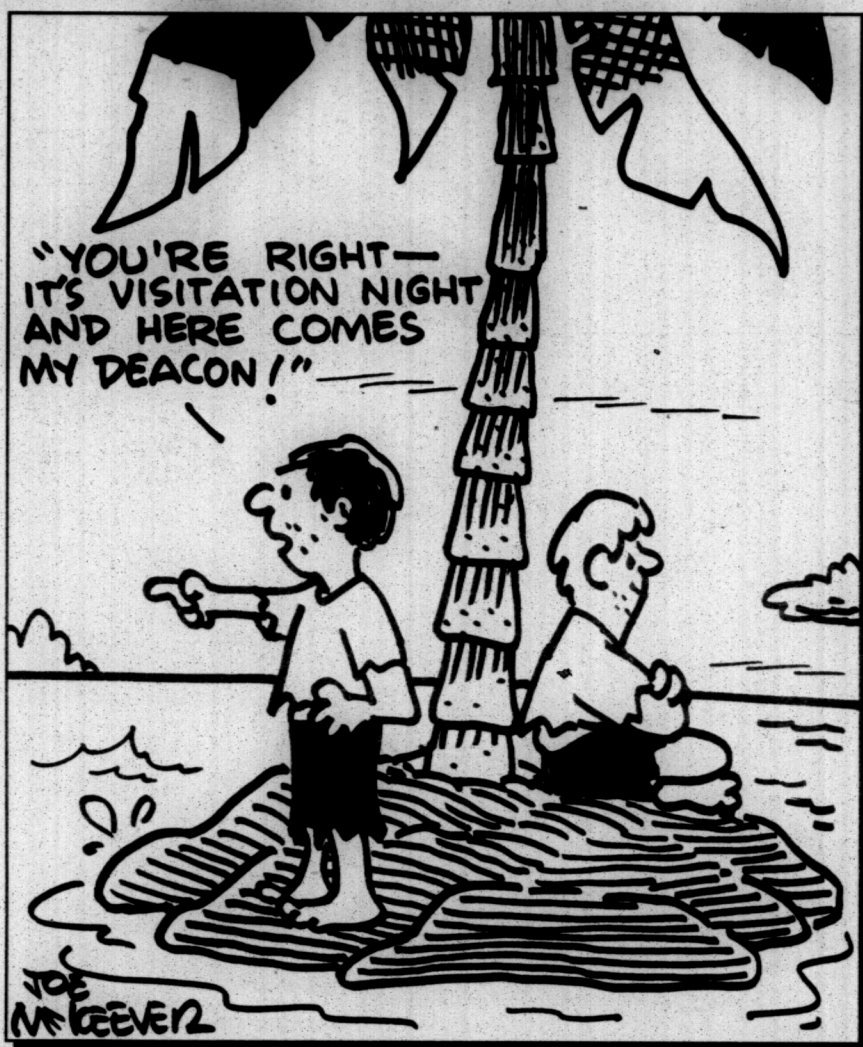
I have participated in the act of imprisoning him in his own church, where I can find him when it's convenient for me to come calling. I have left him there, because it is often too cumbersome to carry him with me in my worldly pursuits.

I have helped build an opulent prison, but it is still prison. I show up for every visitor's day, but it is still prison.

There is something I can do, however, to make this right. Jesus was correct — I have had the key all along that will free him from his imprisonment.

The key is me.

I can release Jesus by taking the Gospel outside the walls of the church. I can share my witness with people who have never heard of the salvation he offers, who have never seen the inside of a church.



I can be persistent with those who resist the message. I can seek out those who look different from me. I can be patient with those who are weaker than me. I can be strong with those who are more powerful than me.

I can take Jesus with me wherever I go, 24 hours of every day. My love for Jesus can be so real that people want to have him in their lives, too.

Like me, every Christian holds the key to freeing Jesus. Together let's make a personal recommitment to remove the heavy bonds we have imposed upon him.

The results will be miraculous, and in the process we will discover we have freed ourselves, too.

GUEST OPINION:



Hollywood and the Christian movie-goer

By Diana McDaniel, member
Coldwater Church, Coldwater

sadder that we had given them our money.

I felt the movie did not give a true picture of God, and that it extended too much sympathy toward Pharaoh and his dad — you know, the one who had all the babies killed in the first place. His killing was not made to look nearly as bad as God's.

Do we think for one minute that Hollywood made the movie because they wanted to do something nice for us? They want to get into our pocketbooks!

They know we are hungry for decent entertainment and we will pay to see it, truthful or not.

If they really cared about us,

they would have made it true to the Bible in every way. They consulted with Christian leaders because they knew it would lend credibility to the project and, in essence, sell it for them.

We are bad about listening to man, and then basing our opinion on their opinion without ever bumping the issue up against our own spiritual plumb line (that is, if we even have one).

Is our flesh so lusting after entertainment that we are willing to compromise the truth? The problems with the movie might be considered minor by some people, but I would be a

little afraid to change the Bible. The word "heresy" comes to mind.

If the world accepts it, it is not from God because the world rejects the things of God. God is truth.

Would we allow our Sunday School teachers to change the Bible story of Moses? Why do we allow Steven Spielberg to do so?

Hollywood is simply throwing us scraps, as usual. Even well-meaning Christians have bought the lie.

We are so TV- and movie-oriented that we have become willing to compromise with, and put money in the pockets of, these same people who despise us in the political arena for our beliefs and convictions.

There is no one who enjoys a good movie more than I do. I just wish there was more good stuff out there.

I'm telling you, though, we won't get it from the non-Christian world in the form of movies like "Prince of Egypt" — and that's a fact.

Deadline set for radio, video awards competition

The Witnessing Through Media Awards will be presented at the Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting (MBIB) Organization's annual banquet on Friday, April 16, at 7:00 p.m. at Ridgecrest Baptist Church, 7469 Old Canton Road, Madison, according to Farrell Blankenship, director of Broadcast Services Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Entries must be in the office of Broadcast Services at the Baptist Building no later than March 1, 1999, 4:45 p.m. An entry form and \$5 entry fee is required for each category entered. Information and entry forms can be obtained by calling the office of Broadcast Services.

Churches can submit entries from a variety of programs such as Sunday School lessons they produce, evangelist outreach, radio devotional, radio and video spots, Christmas musicals, along with any human interest or sports.

"We have had some creative work in radio and video done by our Mississippi churches in the past and I know this year's competition will be no exception," said Blankenship about the upcoming Witnessing Through Media Awards



Competition.

These awards were created to recognize radio and video productions that demonstrate excellence in message design and production in helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. A special clip of each winner will be shown at the banquet.

Due to the diversity in the types of production equipment and personnel being used by churches today the MBIB Steering Committee developed two award divisions. The divisions are: Division I - those using VHS camcorders or other consumer /industrial-grade equipment in production as well as volunteers or small budget projects. Division 2 - those using S-VHS, 3/4-Inch, 3/4-inch SP, BetaCam and other broadcast type equipment along with a professional

in charge or use of outside production house.

One award for video (broadcast or non-broadcast) and one award for radio in each category in each division will be given. The categories are: Best Program - Missions /Evangelism; Best Program - Church Musicals; Best Program - Community Service; Best Spot; and Best First Time Entry. Judges will also select one over-all winner as being the Most Creative Use of Radio or Television.

Following the awards banquet several outstanding workshops that are both practical and interesting will be on Saturday, April 17, from 8:00 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. at Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison. This year two mini conferences are planned for basic audio and camera opera-

tion: "You're on the Air," led by Tony Brooks and "NO! Your Other Left," led by Don Moore. For those who are involved in working with sound in a local church television ministry there is a longer format called "Sound Advice," led by Tony Brooks and David Edmonds. "Technology 2000," led by Glen McEwen, will look at new and merging technology. Other conferences include: "Creative Production," led by Wayne Pierce; "OOP'S I'm the Director," led by Don Moore; "Getting Started in Media," led by Chip Turner; and "Internet Ministry 101," led by Wes Pegues.

For entry forms or more information contact Blankenship at the Broadcast Services Department at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE



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Growing Disciples Seminar set April 26-27

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

The first-ever Growing Disciples Seminar is set for April 26-27 at First Church, Jackson.

With topics such as "Growing Spiritual Redwoods," "Share Jesus Without Fear," and "Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers," the conference begins at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, April 26, and concludes the next evening.

Registration on or before March 26 is \$30 for both days, or \$20 for one day. After March 26, registration is \$35 for both days or \$25 for one day. Ministers bringing three or more people can register for free.

The seminar features Bill Mitchell, author of Building Strong Families; Bill Faye, author of Share Jesus Without Fear; Bill Easum, author of Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers: Turning Members into Ministers; and Bob Biehl, author of Mentoring and Wisdom for Men.

Easum is founder of 21st Century Strategies. Faye is host of the syndicated radio show, "Let's Go," and is a chaplain with the Pro Golfers of America. Biehl is a charter member of Focus on the Family. Mitchell is a frequent guest on national network news.

Marcus Peagler, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) discipleship director, explained that each author will give a keynote address of challenge related

to their books' content. Each will also teach application during breakout conferences.

"The training is both for individuals' discipleship development and for small group development back in the churches," said Peagler.

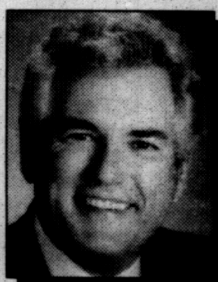
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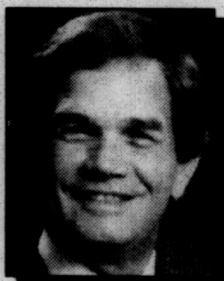
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Evangelism Department and the Discipleship and Family Ministries Department are sponsors.

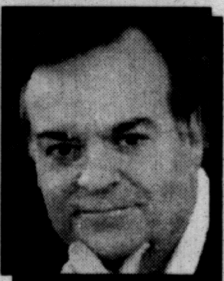
For more information contact Peagler at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651.



Biehl



Mitchell



Faye

'99 Youth Evangelism Conf. planned

"Where will your teenagers be when the clock strikes 12 midnight on New Year's Eve, 1999?" asks Don Lum, youth consultant for the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). "If they are at the Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC) they will be praising God and gearing up to serve him in the new century."

Lum announced preliminary plans for the 1999 YEC on Friday, Dec. 31, at the A. E. Wood Coliseum on the campus of Mississippi College.

Normally a two-day event, this year's YEC will be a one day event, starting with registration at 11 a.m. and concluding at midnight, Lum indicated. "This way groups will only have to spend one night in a hotel, and will not have to be driving home in the predawn hours of New Year's Day," he said.

The theme for the 1999 YEC is Y2K, which stands for "Year 2 Kare," Lum said. "The event is being planned with the purpose of impacting teenagers for the 21st Century." The 1998 YEC had

over 3,000 students and sponsors, a record, Lum indicated.

Dennis Lee, a Dallas based ventriloquist featured at the 1997 YEC, will be returning. Other guest artists and speakers are still pending, Lum said.

With the once in a lifetime experience of changing the calendar from the year 1999 to the year 2000, churches across the state are making plans for special youth emphasis. Lum is hoping youth leaders will consider making YEC part of their plans.

For more information, contact Don Lum at the Evangelism Department of the MBCB, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



Dennis Lee (right) with Ricky

Ch. planting initiative to begin soon

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—The North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Southeastern Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, N.C., have jointly named William E. "Bill" Brown to head the seminary's new NAMB church-planting center, which is part of the board's Nehemiah Project.

The Nehemiah Project ultimately will establish a church-planting center on each SBC seminary campus in the United States and Canada. The center at Southeastern is the third designed to produce church planters with both academic preparation and practical, field-based experience in church planting.

For SEBTS, the agreement will have the entire eastern seaboard as a priority area for new church starts, focusing first on New Hampshire, an area where the seminary is already committed to working through an agreement with the New Hampshire Baptist Association.

Macedonian Call looking for automobiles

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Tom Hearon would like to do a little preaching, though he is not a preacher, or even a teacher. Hearon is the founder of The Macedonian Call Foundation, a non-profit ministry dedicated to providing transportation for furloughing missionaries and their families in Mississippi.

According to Hearon, people have missed a golden opportunity to gain a nice tax deduction by donating a used automobile to the Macedonian Call Foundation.

Macedonian Call accepts donated automobiles from concerned Christians. Hearon sees to it that these cars are in top running form, then leases them to the furlough missionary family for \$100 a month, which basically covers the cost of insurance.

"Furloughs are designed to give missionaries relief from as much worry as possible. Yet, Singapore, while on furlough, (Photo by Carl M. White)

when they come to Mississippi, their greatest problem seems to be a car to transport their family safely," Hearon said.

Hearon stresses the word "safely." Because of the limited time a missionary will spend in

the states it is not economical to purchase a new car. Inexpensive used cars often have high mileage, which can mean bad brakes or other problems.

"Just today," Hearon said, "we needed to spend \$132 on

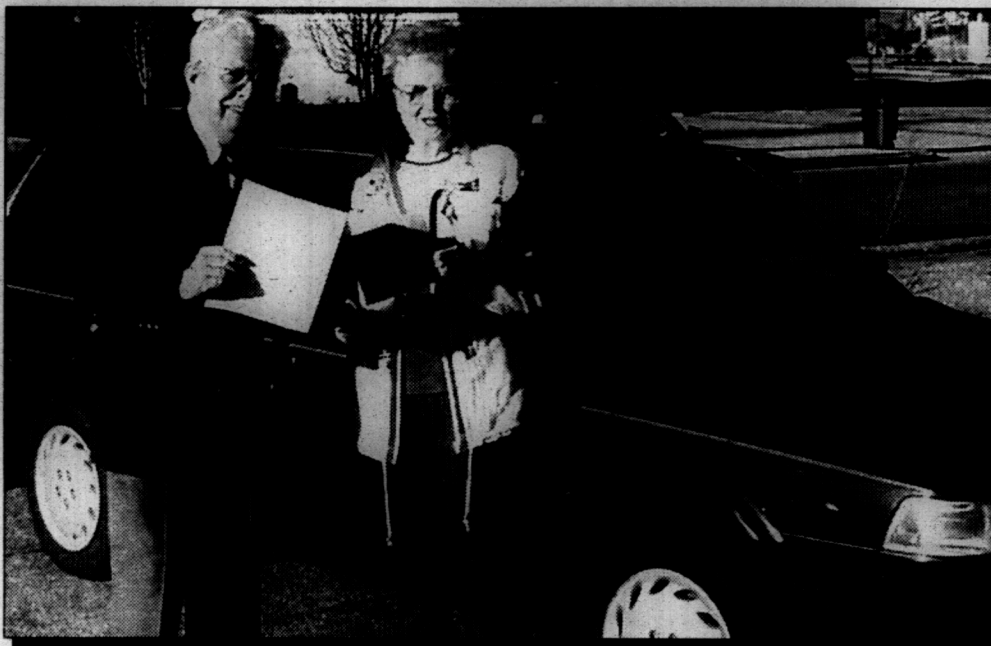
the brakes of one of the cars." Hearon is adamant that safety will be a constant concern.

"The Macedonian Call Foundation is for the international missionary when he returns to his home turf. We want to relieve him or her of the greatest problem to be faced. You can give your automobile to the foundation and take a tax deduction for the contribution at the end of the year. You can deduct the full retail value of the vehicle.

"If an automobile is left in an estate then that automobile may be a great legacy to leave those that serve our Lord. We can use any and all autos, boats, campers, four wheelers or trucks. They all have value even though they are not used by the missionary."

Hearon said this donation should not be considered a tithe or part of a tithe.

For more information about the Macedonian Call Foundation contact Tom Hearon, Sr. at P. O. Box 156, Ridgeland, MS 39158-0156 or at (601) 956-7770.



HANDING OVER THE TITLE — Patty Dent (right) of Clinton, hands over the title to a 1992 Toyota station wagon to Tom Hearon of the Macedonian Call Foundation. Dent's automobile was the first one promised to the ministry, but Hearon, Sr. at P. O. Box 156, Ridgeland, MS 39158-0156 or at (601) 956-7770.

Dobson decries gambling as 'most powerful force'

WASHINGTON (BP)—His service on the federal panel studying the impact of gambling has convinced James Dobson the activity is a "destroyer" and the lobby behind it is the "most powerful force in government today," the president of Focus on the Family said.

Dobson, widely recognized as the leading family advocate among American evangelical Christians, made his assessment in his January newsletter, which is sent to about 2.4 million constituents of Focus on the Family. Dobson is one of nine members of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, which is to issue a report in June after a two-year investigation. His appointment to the commission was criticized by the gambling industry.

"Thirty years ago, gambling was widely understood, in the culture to be addictive, progressive, and dangerous," Dobson wrote. "Parents taught their children about its evils, and some families, including my

own, would not even permit playing cards in the home. More recently, however, betting has been given a face-lift by the industry — even changing the name from gambling to 'gaming.' The effect of this relentless propaganda has been dramatic. Most Americans now think of gambling not as a vice or unsavory habit, but as harmless entertainment."

Dobson cited statistics, newspaper accounts and testimony before the commission in supporting his criticism of gambling's widespread, negative impact (see data box).

Gambling "preys on the desperation of the poor and its promises are based on lies," Dobson said. Among the lies is the assurance state lotteries will produce huge funds for public schools, "despite studies showing that after states legalize lotteries they actually reduce spending for education," he said.

In response to the letter, American Gaming Association President Frank Fahrenkopf said it shows Dobson "never had any intention of taking a fair and unbiased look at gaming."

"It's unfortunate that after 19 months as a commissioner he still cannot accept the fact that the gaming industry provides more than 1 million well-paying jobs with benefits and is an entertainment choice for millions of other Americans. Instead, he has chosen to rely on old stereotypes and anecdotes, ignoring official state and local records documenting the positive economic and social impact" of gambling and the testimony of public officials and religious leaders, Fahrenkopf said in a written statement.

Dobson, in his letter, contended the gambling industry has extended its influence through its sizable spending on elections. The anti-gambling governors of Alabama and South Carolina lost their re-

election races in November to candidates supported by gambling forces, Dobson said. The industry spent \$10 million in Missouri and more than \$70 million in California to win gambling initiatives, he wrote.

Both Democrat and Republican leaders in Washington have accepted large donations from gambling interests, Dobson said. In recent years, gambling gifts have totaled \$7.6 million to Democrats and \$6.1 to Republicans, he wrote.

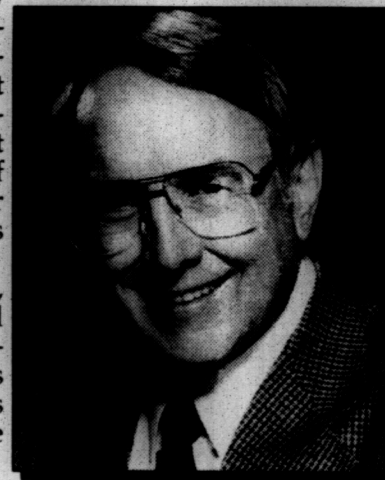
"This is how government works in Washington these days," he wrote. "While the needs of families are ignored, such as the unfair 'marriage penalty tax' that was left intact last year after Republicans promised specifically to repeal it, our representatives continue dancing to the beat of gambling interests across the nation. They should feel our displeasure.

"It is my belief that NO special interest group should ever be given such power over the electoral and legislative process as occurs today. As long as money sets the agenda, gambling will continue to grow and shape the fabric of American culture."

The National Gambling Impact Study Commission was scheduled to meet Feb. 8-10 in Virginia Beach, Va. The panel was expected to begin discussing its report, which is to be issued by June 20.

The commission was established in 1996 to study the social and economic impacts of gambling. The panel has held field meetings since the beginning of 1997 at such locations as Atlantic City, N.J.; Boston; Chicago; San Diego; Biloxi, Miss.; and Las Vegas, Nev.

Focus on the Family, a 30-minute radio broadcast that reaches from 3 to 5 million listeners on weekdays, dedicated three of its January programs to gambling. Dobson's February letter also will be about the subject, he said.



Dobson

Statistics cited by Dobson:

- Americans spend more money each year on gambling than on groceries.
- Five to 8% of adolescents are addicted to gambling.
- More money is spent in Mississippi on gambling than on all retail sales.
- Children 4 years old may put money legally in South Carolina's 30,000-plus video poker machines as long as they don't accept any winnings.
- 72% of student-athletes surveyed had gambled in some form since beginning college.
- Nearly 35% of athletes have gambled on sports, including more than 45% of men.
- More than 5% of male athletes have been paid for playing poorly in a contest, bet on their own games, or provided inside information.

Gulfshore, Central Hills seeking applicants

Central Hills Baptist Retreat and Gulfshore Baptist Assembly are accepting applications for employment for the 1999 summer camp staff.

Staff orientation takes place at Central Hills May 23 through June 4. Lifeguard training will be June 6-10.

Camp manager Dan West says he will be hiring men who can serve as counselors, as activity instructors, and as operations workers.

"Hopefully, tent camping is in the past," says West. "Construction has begun for two lodge buildings to replace the tents."

The first week of camp will begin June 14.

At Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, according to manager Frank Simmons, the summer program begins May 15 and continues until Aug. 10.

The assembly schedule features senior adult, youth, music, family, and adult leadership conferences.

Available positions include food services, Red Cross trained lifeguards, housekeeping, registrations, first aid, grounds, and maintenance.

Both facilities provide activities for the staff including opportunities for personal

spiritual growth and development.

Interested students are encouraged to meet with West and Simmons Feb. 22

through March 4 on various college campuses across the state for prospective employee interviews (See list below.)

Summer camp college recruiting schedule

Monday (Feb. 22)	Miss. Delta Comm. College BSU Delta State BSU Center	11 a.m.-1 p.m. 2-4:30 p.m.
Tuesday (Feb. 23)	Northwest Miss. Comm. College BSU Blue Mountain College BSU Center	11 a.m.-1 p.m. 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Wednesday (Feb. 24)	Miss. State University BSU Center	11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Thursday (Feb. 25)	Northeast Miss. Comm. College BSU Ole Miss BSU Center	10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. 3:30-6 p.m.
Monday (Mar. 1)	Hinds Comm. College BSU Center Miss. College, Rogers Student Center	10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. 2-6 p.m.
Tuesday (Mar. 2)	Co-Lin Comm. College BSU Center East Central Comm. College BSU	10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Wednesday (Mar. 3)	Meridian Comm. College BSU Center Jones County Junior College BSU	10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 2-5 p.m.
Thursday (Mar. 4)	Wm. Carey College, Crawford Hall BSU University of Southern Miss. BSU Center	10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

ELEVATION OF INTERRUPTIONS

Virtually everybody struggles with the interruptions of life. Whether at home, at work, at church, or at play, we are subject to interruptions that disrupt our plans. I arrived at the Baptist Building on a recent Monday morning and was told before I got off the parking lot that the phone system was completely shut down. You could not call out, but on the flip side, there was no one who would be calling in either.

Monday mornings are pretty hectic at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. The accumulated thoughts and needs from across the state that arise on Sunday come flowing in the



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

phone lines on Monday morning. On this Monday morning there was a kind of collective relief because the phones were not working and therefore it would be impossible for anyone to call in and disrupt the work that was being done or to interrupt some activity.

Before I could get to my

office three different people told me that the phones were not working. While each person was trying to look disappointed, the gleam in their eye or the glee in their voice betrayed them. Each of them went on to express that they could get a lot of work done without interruption. I understood.

I had a number of things I needed to get done quickly myself. People tried calling the Baptist Building but nothing happened. The phones were just dead. The repair people had been contacted and everyone was busy taking care of the things that were pressing in upon them without any interruptions.

I got busy myself during this time of lull from the telephone, but then I reminded myself what I had at times told staff members, that interruptions do not interfere with our ministry, interruptions oftentimes are ministry. So many times the greatest opportunities to touch a life redemptively with the love of Christ come through an interruption. A phone call, a crisis, a question, a breakdown, an emergency, a storm, an illness — on and on the

interruptions come and with every interruption there is, at our heart's door, an opportunity to help and to be Christ's ambassador.

There is a sense in which, if you will read the Gospels closely, you might even begin to think that Jesus' ministry was a ministry of interruptions. A man came to him at night and Jesus taught him of the new birth; an adulterous woman was brought to Jesus and she learned of his power to forgive; Jesus heard of the death of a young woman and was able to bring new life; Jesus' ministry seemed to be put on hold when he learned of the death of a friend; Jesus was praying and his disciples interrupted him; and then he was praying and soldiers came and dragged him away. Interruption after interruption — but none of them interfered with his ministry for, literally, they became his ministry.

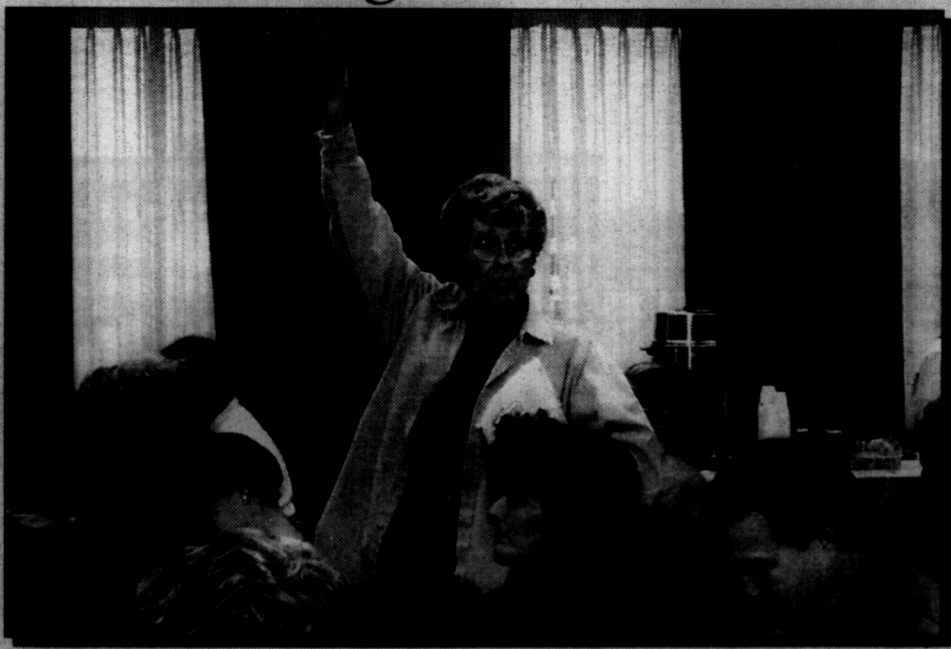
What a lesson for each of us — not to run from life's interruptions but to allow God's power working in us to transform the interruptions into works of God. Have you ever been interrupted by a child, or a fellow worker, or a flat, or a fall, or a phone call — sure, me too! But only in our best times could they possibly be described as our "Jesus times." Are we able to turn them around and, rather than them be interruptions, recognize them as opportunities for ministry?

Even though I had much to do apart from answering the phone that Monday morning, I found that I began praying, "Lord please help them to hurry and get the phones fixed." Soon they were repaired. My phone began to ring. The interruptions had returned and I was able to say, "thank you, Lord," as he reminded me again that interruptions do not interfere with ministry — they are ministry!

Churches & homosexuality seminar topic

"How Can Churches Respond to Homosexuality?" is the subject of a Love in Action seminar to be held Feb. 26-27 at First Church, Louisville. Seminar topics will include Roots of Homosexuality; Unhealthy Family Systems; Church Response; and Support Group Model for Loved Ones. Speakers will include John Smid, Love in Action executive director; Johnny and Linda Cude; Ann Phillips; and Nathan Bell. The seminar will run from 7-9 p.m. on Feb. 26, and from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. on Feb. 27. For more information, call (601) 773-6246.

Delivering VBS materials



Becky Martin, consultant with the Sunday School Department of Lifeway Christian Resources, hands out Vacation Bible School materials to participants at the VBS Early Bird Clinic, Feb. 9 at the Baptist Building. The theme for the 1999 material is "Mt. Extreme: the Ultimate Good News Challenge." For more information on VBS contact the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651. (Photo by Carl M. White)

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



Mississippi College (MC) has announced the establishment of the Gladys Miles Scholarship Fund. The scholarship was established by George O. Miles of Raymond in memory of his wife Gladys. Miles received his undergraduate degree from MC in 1954, and graduated from MC School of Law in 1963. The scholarship shall be awarded to deserving students in need of financial assistance. Pictured with Miles (center) are Howell W. Todd (left) president of MC and Don Phillips (right) member of the MC board of trustees.

Blue Mountain College has scheduled the Senior Girls Preview Day on Feb. 26. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. and activities will include a campus tour with actual classes and lunch. Reservations can be made through Feb. 22 by calling 1-800-235-0136.

Blue Mountain College Department of Speech and Theatre will present Jerry Twedt's mystery play "Murder on Center Stage" as its spring production. The production, under the direction of Donna L. Clevinger, will open on Feb. 25 and run through Feb. 27. All performances will be held at 8 p.m. in the Garrett Auditorium on campus. For ticket information and reservations, call (601) 685-4771 ext. 131.

REVIVAL DATES

First, Marion: Feb. 21-24; Danny Lanier, Meridian, evangelist; Hubert Greer, Wesson, music; Walter M. Blackman, pastor.

Hollandale, Hollandale: Feb. 21-24; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; weekday services, 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Charles Wesley, evangelist; Greg Bennett, music.

West Laurel, Laurel: March 7-10; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Ron Lynch, Charlotte, N. C., evangelist; Floyd Grice, Laurel, music; Cary Worthington, pastor.

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The annual meeting of the Mississippi College Library Associates will be held Feb. 28 at 2 p.m. in room AV-1 of the Speed Library's Learning Resources Center. Special guest speaker will be wildlife photographer Stephen Kirkpatrick. He has twice been named a Highly Commended Award winner in Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition

held in London, England. Born in Delaware and raised in Alaska and Louisiana, Kirkpatrick now makes his home in Madison. For more information, call David Wright at (601) 925-3438.



The Reflections of Blue Mountain College (BMC) perform Christian music to share the gospel and to lead Christians in worship. The group (pictured, from left) are Carrie Sanders, Senatobia; Eddie Johnson, Winona; Connie Harris, Oxford; Troy Comer, Ripley; Anna Teel, Red Banks; Bryan Westbrook, Glen; and Kristy Brashier, Bartlett. To inquire about the group, contact Tracy Moser or Julie Meeks at BMC BSU at (601) 685-4771 ext. 137.

STAFF CHANGES

First Church, Lumberton, recently called **Tom Fortenberry** as minister of music and **Michael Kelly** as youth minister. Fortenberry, who lives in Pine Burr, is presently teaching band and chorus for the Columbia School District. He has served as church music director for several churches, both in Georgia and Mississippi. Kelly was previously active in the youth program at Improve Church. Johnny Breazeale is pastor.

Shiloh Church, Oxford, has called **Dāvid Thomas** as pastor effective Jan. 30. A native of Brinkley Ark., Thomas received his education at Mid American Seminary. His previous place of service was Paynes Church, Charleston.



Cross Section, The Mississippi College Baptist Student Union drama team is available to present programs for churches, youth groups or associational gatherings. Members of Cross Section are (front row, from left) Leah D'Mello, Pontotoc; Anne Richardson, Brandon; Amber Files, Tupelo; Kendra Sue Niven, Natchez; Anna Walden, Jackson; (back row, from left) James Cheatham, Rolling Fork; John Tramel, Jackson; Michael Pritchard, Memphis; Jon Caranna, Gulfport; Chris Kinsley, Ridgeland. For more information contact Christy Carley, BSU director at 925-3238. Charlene Barnette is drama director.

Joyful Celebration

Woman's Conference

March 20, 1999

8:30 am - 3:00 pm

First Baptist Church
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Registration through

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Lisa Leavell
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PARADISE LANES: Mississippi's only smoke and alcohol free Bowling Center. Call about Lock-ins, group rates, fund raisers, and leagues. Located at 820 Cooper Road, Jackson, MS (601) 372-7700.

Fishing tournament scheduled for March 5-6

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications director

The first of a series of Christian-oriented fishing tournaments in Mississippi takes place March 5-6 at Natchez.

Each tournament features a Friday evening dinner with inspiration, fellowship, and an evangelistic message.

On Saturday the tournament is operated by a national Christian organization called Fishers of Men. The organization, heavily influenced by Southern Baptists, is operating tournaments in 9 states with 11 divisions. A national championship tourney

will be held in the fall at a place to be designated later.

The Natchez tourney supper will take place March 5 at Parkway Baptist Church, Natchez, at 6:30 p.m.

Jim Phillips, pastor of North Greenwood Church, Greenwood, and a professional fisherman, will be the featured speaker.

Phillips said that during a day of fishing, "hopefully, you will have an opportunity to share Christ with your partner."

Other Mississippi dates and places will be April 16-17 at Ross Barnett; May 14-15 at Sardis; June 11-12 at Columbus; and July 9-10 at Lake Ferguson at Greenville.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Evangelism and Men's Ministries Departments sponsor the Friday evening programs.

Interested fishermen — male and female, age 18 and up — may register for the tournament by writing division director Jim Phillips at 615 Grand Blvd., Greenwood, MS 38930, phone 601-453-7818. Entry fees are \$120 per team. Membership in Fishers of Men is required at \$25 per year.

Information can be obtained by calling N. Greenwood Baptist Church at 601-453-2801, or by E-mailing Phillips at Fishingpreacher@hotmail.com.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Johnathon Cissom has accepted the call to full time service. A senior in high school, Cissom plans to attend Blue Mountain College in the fall. Pictured (from left) are Harvey Sewell, pastor of Pine Grove Church, Dumas; Cissom; and Jerry Michael Williams, youth director.

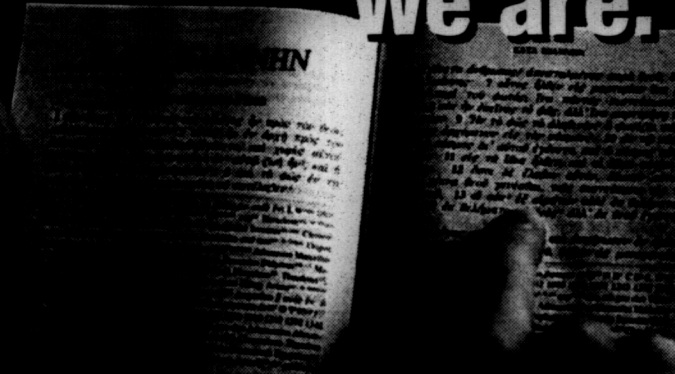
First Church, Tunica, presented certificates to six deacons during the morning worship service on Jan. 31. Each of the men was recognized for faithful service as a deacon and has been elected to the status of Honorary Active Deacon. Pictured (front row, from left) are Fred W. Rushton, 42 years; A. T. Tucker, 42 years; Ulrich Owen Bibb Jr., 39 years; Walter J. Johnson, 12 years; and William B. Earnheart, 32 years; (back row) Jack L. Wilkes, 48 years;



Deacons of First Church, Tunica

Danny Smith, interim pastor; and J. T. Emanuel, chairman of deacons.

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Faith Church, Hickory Flat, licensed Scott Hardy (center) to the ministry on Jan. 31. Speaker for the service was Lamar Burkes (right), pastor of Bethel Church, Kosciusko. W. G. Dowdy (left) is pastor.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs of Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc Association, are pictured (front row, from left) Miranda McLaughlin and Emily Robbins achieved 5th year badge; Amber Dillard achieved 4th year badge; (back row) Amber Lewis and Lauren Ann McLaughlin received 1st year badge.

Women's Ministry of Calvary Church, Newton, will host a Women's Conference March 19 and 20. Speaker for this event is Shirley Cothran Barret, wife, mother, author, and former Miss America. Barret was born and reared in Denton, Texas. Registration begins on Friday at 6 p.m. with the conference continuing at 9 a.m. on Saturday. Refreshments will be served Saturday from 8-8:45 a.m. and a boxed lunch will be provided for the noon meal. Send name and check (\$25) to Donna Hudson, Calvary Baptist Church, P. O. Box 377, Newton, MS 39345. For further information call the church at (601) 683-3637.

Crystal Springs Church, Tylertown, will have its Sanctuary Renovation Dedication Service at 3 p.m. on Feb. 28.

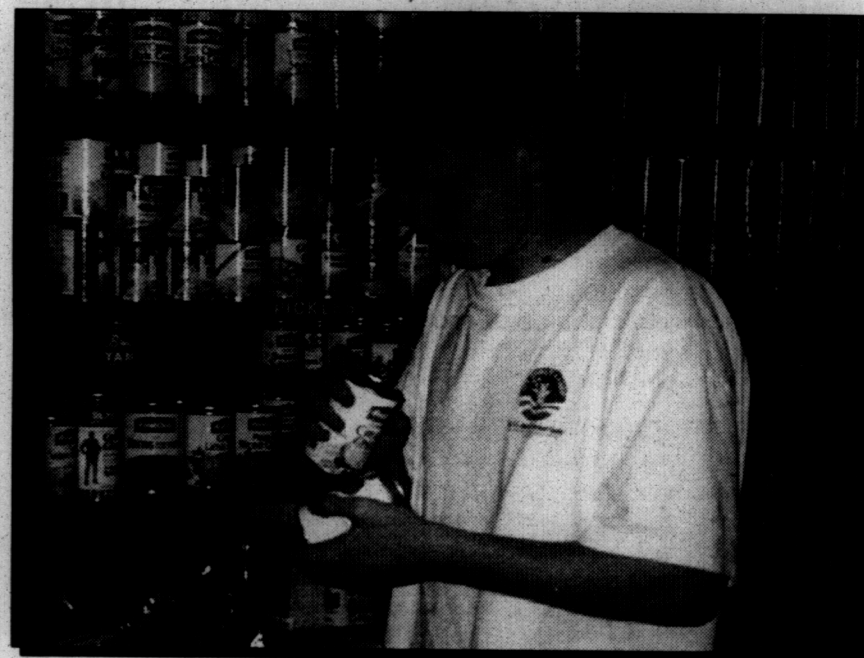
The Gulf Coast Ministers of Music Association is sponsoring an adult choir festival at First Church, Ocean Springs, 7 p.m. on March 18. Pre-registration is needed, and there is a registration fee of \$1 per choir member. For more information and registration, call John McCall at (228) 864-2584.

Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa, celebrated the completion of its sanctuary renovation project, *Renew by Faith*, on Jan. 31. This project began in February 1997 and was completed in the fall of 1998 - with a total project cost of \$105,000. Among those honored were the members of the *Renew by Faith* committee: Jimmy Smith, chairman; Steven Ball; Bill Davis; Glenda Ely; Shirley Massey; and Helen Rabby. Bobby Perry, director of the Gulf Coast Association was honored for his leadership in the capital fund-raising campaign. Perry and Ernest Sadler, director of the Jackson County Association, were guest speakers during the service. Greg Johnston, pastor, led the dedication service.



New Prospect Church, Olive Branch, burned the financial note on their building January 31, 1999. Their previous building was struck by lightning in 1993. The new building was completed in 1995. Pictured (from left) are Jim Craig, John Hardy, Bill McCulley, Kenny Dunlap, and Buddy Perstrop, pastor.

Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg, will honor its senior adults on Feb. 27, 2-4 p.m., in fellowship hall. Activities will include entertainment and refreshments will be served. If transportation is needed or for more information, call Karen at the church office (601) 268-2801.



Members of the Youth on Mission, Cato Church, Mendenhall, delivered several boxes of food from their church and provided assistance in sorting items received. "It's a great feeling to know you're helping others, even in the small things," said Lowell Ingram, pastor. Joseph Ingram is pictured checking the expiration date on a can of soup recently at Crestwood Baptist Center, Jackson.

Maryland/Delaware partnership update

"The Partnership Office now has available 50 project requests from Maryland/Delaware," said Paul Harrell, Director of partnership missions for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The Maryland/Delaware convention has a goal of beginning 25 new churches per year. The Mississippi partnership is an integral part of their strategy for accomplishing this, Harrell indicated.

MBCB began a three year partnership with the Maryland/Delaware Baptist Convention (M/DBC) in January of this year. Charles Barnes, Executive Director of M/DBC, is a native Mississippian, reared at Stonewall and educated at Mississippi College. He has spent 38 years ministering in Maryland/Delaware.

Harrell recently made a "vision tour" of M/DBC with 12 local Directors of Missions. "Our strategy is to link the 12 associations in M/DBC with one or more associations in Mississippi," Harrell said. "From these relationships would flow linkages in Maryland and Delaware."

M/DBC is at the crossroads of the Northeast corridor that stretches from Washington, D.C. through Maryland/Delaware, to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, Harrell said. Twenty-five percent of the U.S. population lives and works in this corridor. More than 8.5 million people live in a 40 mile radius of Laurel, Maryland. "Yet, there are many large communities and towns that do not have a Southern Baptist church presence," he said.

The 50 project requests have been grouped in the following categories:

- Evangelism teams
- VBS/Backyard Bible clubs
- Leadership training
- Summer youth ministries
- Youth revival teams
- Day Camp leadership
- Clowns, puppets, face painting
- Construction

"We invite every association and the churches of Mississippi to consider this partnership in helping to bring our world to Jesus," Harrell said.

For more information contact the Partnership Missions office at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651.



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Justices dodge case involving Bible verses

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The U.S. Supreme Court declined Jan. 11 to disturb a lower court's decision freeing a convicted sex offender because the trial judge quoted Bible verses before pronouncing his sentence.

Arron Pattno was sentenced after being convicted of sexual assault for having sexual contact with a 13-year-old boy. Before pronouncing the sentence, the judge read Bible verses denouncing homosexuality.

The Nebraska Supreme Court said that a reasonable person "could have questioned the judge's impartiality" after hearing him cite Scripture.

Pattno pleaded guilty to abusing the youth he met through an Internet chat room in 1996. He later challenged his sentence as excessive, arguing the judge showed bias against Pattno because of his sexual orientation.

The state Supreme Court sided with Pattno.

"Because the trial judge interjected his own religious views immediately prior to sentencing, a reasonable person could conclude that the sentence was based upon personal bias or prejudice of the judge," Nebraska's top court said.

The Nebraska court also noted that Pattno's crime was sexual contact with a minor, not sexual contact with another male.

The court said the scripture read by the judge was not rele-

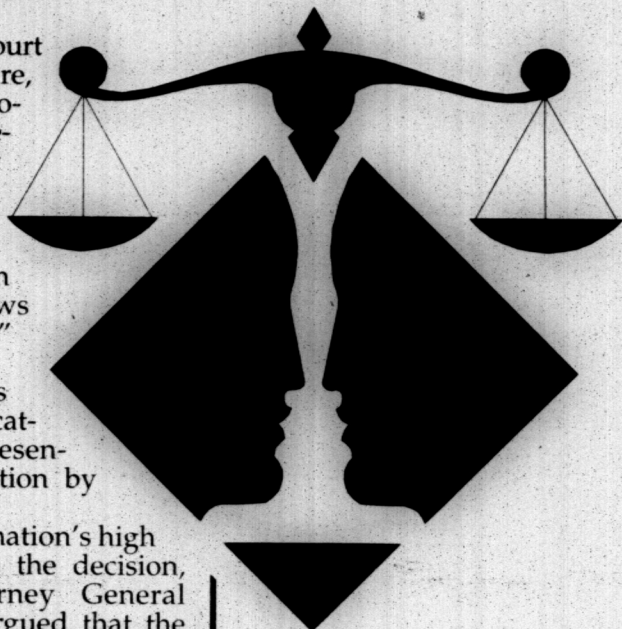
vant to the crime to which Pattno pleaded guilty, "and it should not have been considered by the judge in determining an appropriate sentence."

The state Supreme Court also said the judge violated the separation of church and state.

"Allowing a court to recite scripture, and thereby proclaim its interpretation of that scripture, implies that the court is advancing its own religious views from the bench," the court said.

After Pattno's sentence was vacated, he was resented to probation by another judge.

In asking the nation's high court to reverse the decision, Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg argued that the Nebraska ruling could "lead to an extensive inquiry into the religious beliefs and practices of each judge in Nebraska."



Staying Well

Getting It Right From the Start

John and Cindy had a great deal of apprehension when they found out they were going to have a baby. The many changes taking place in their lives, coupled with the new responsibility of caring and providing for a child, seemed overwhelming. But when they called Baptist to make preparations to have the baby, they found *Right From the Start*, providing help for nearly every phase of pregnancy, childbirth and newborn care.

Right From the Start is a comprehensive case management program, helping guide parents through the uncertainty and excitement of the days ahead. When prospective parents make their initial call, they are assigned a case manager — a friendly and knowledgeable registered nurse who helps them sort through the many and complex issues involved. They also receive a comprehensive manual, providing detailed information about pregnancy, childbirth and the baby's first year, as well as advice and answers for family issues surrounding the new baby.

Parents registered in the program may also attend a number of free classes and seminars on a variety of issues including childbirth, early pregnancy, breastfeeding, multiple births, siblings, grandparenting, infant/child CPR, and fitness. In addition, Baptist, as a comprehensive medical center, can provide critical care for mother and baby if needed.

"Expectant couples have so many questions," says Julie Ferguson, RN, OB/GYN Case Manager. "They want to know everything from what our Labor-Delivery-Recovery (LDR) suites look like, to what happens in case of an emergency, to how much they can expect their hospital bills to be. Meeting with their case manager early in their pregnancy allows them to get these questions answered. Then they are ready to continue preparation for their childbirth experiences and parenting."

Understanding the Benefits of Parental Education Programs

To register or for more information, call 1-800-948-6262.

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Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

My whole world revolved around my husband until I realized nothing would satisfy him. He sabotages everything with his anger to prevent any enjoyment on my part.

In your letter, you expressed that you have tried counseling, separations, and prayer. Those are all good responses to the problem. Your use of the word "sabotage" is the real key. The word literally means "deliberate subversion." What would cause a person to deliberately subvert someone else's enjoyment? It is usually due to insecurity in oneself, fear that some activity or misdeed will be discovered, etc. I wish I could offer you more hope. You already know that the hope in this situation is that God is on his throne and can change your husband's life if he will make himself available to the still, small voice of the Father. You can be an encourager for your husband. You can also ignore his angry outbursts/temper tantrums, and find your peace in being the person God created you to be. Serve your Lord with gladness to the best of your ability. Be careful, though, that you do not put yourself in a dangerous situa-

tion. When he acts like a bomb waiting to go off, keep your distance and love him with long arms.

My seven-year-old seems to mimic any sexual body movement he sees on television. How should I address this with him?

Your seven-year-old is inquisitive, as any normal seven-year-old should be. First, carefully monitor what he is watching on television. Because he is so inquisitive, he will catch any stimulation sent his way. You would be wise to shut off such programs; distract your child with other activities, such as reading together. Secondly, when he has been exposed to such programs, inform him that is indeed how his body works, but that such moves are to be saved for when he is married to the woman God has chosen for him. Don't shame him for innocently trying to figure out how his body works. Don't make light of his gyrations or tell him "No!" in a loud voice. He will eventually come to understand that even sexual topics are OK to discuss as a family, and that you are the best resource for correct information.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

LIFE AND WORK

The call to difficult discipleship

Mark 2:1-12, 18-20; 8:14-26

By Hugh Plunkett

For many, life's primary quest is for ease, comfort, and security. In a society in which things are easy to open, easy to solve, easy to assemble, and easy to own, the ultimate goal becomes the easy life. We must be confronted with Jesus' call to a difficult, demanding, exacting discipleship.

Conflict (2:3-7). Soon after the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he encountered opposition and conflict. Four men went to great effort to bring a paralyzed man to Jesus. Jesus pronounced forgiveness of the afflicted man's sins. Teachers of the Law who were present silently questioned Jesus' actions and judged him guilty of blasphemy. Just as Jesus

experienced conflict in his ministry, his disciples are to expect conflict with the world.

Criticism (2:18). Some people asked Jesus why his disciples did not fast, thus, indirectly criticizing Jesus. Jesus and his disciples were criticized for not following expected norms. We, too, must be ready to deal with criticism for living by his principles.

Joy and sorrow (2:19-20). Jesus responded to the criticism of fasting by comparing himself with a bridegroom in whose presence guests rejoice. He indicated that the time would come when he would be taken away from his followers. At that time, fasting would be appropriate.

Jesus' presence and strength



Plunkett

(8:14-21). Jesus and his disciples were traveling by boat from the western side of the Sea of Galilee to the eastern side. Jesus warned them of "the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod" (v. 15). The disciples misunderstood, so Jesus explained. He stressed that his power and provision were more than adequate to sustain the disciples.

When Nero ruled as the Emperor of Rome, he was served by a band of soldiers known as "The Emperor's Wrestlers." These men, hand-picked from the best and the bravest to the land, stood in the Coliseum before each contest and chanted, "We, the wrestlers, wrestle for you, O Emperor, to win for you the victory and from you, the victor's crown." When the Roman army was sent to fight in Gaul, no soldiers were more loyal than these wrestlers, lead by their centurion, Vespasian. But

news reached Nero that many of the wrestlers had accepted the Christian faith. To be Christian meant death, even to those who served Nero best. Therefore, he decreed, "If there be any among the wrestlers who clings to the faith of the Christian, he must die."

The decree was received in the dead of winter. Vespasian called the soldiers together and asked, "Are there any among you who cling to the faith of the Christian? If so, let him step forward!" Forty wrestlers stepped up two paces, respectfully saluted and stood at attention. Vespasian said, "I am not willing that your blood be on your comrades' hands, so I am going to order you to march out on the lake of ice. I shall leave you there to the mercy of the elements. Fire, however, will be waiting to welcome any one willing to renounce this false faith."

The forty wrestlers were stripped and marched toward the darkness that covered the

icy surface. As they marched, they broke into the old chant of the arena: "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the Victor's crown!" As morning drew near, one figure, overcome by exposure, crept quietly toward the fire renouncing his Lord. Faintly, but clearly from out of the darkness came the song, "Thirty-nine wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the Victor's crown!" Vespasian looked at the figure drawing close to the fire, and then out into the darkness where came the song of faith. As he looked, he seemed to see a greater light shining in the darkness. Off came his helmet, down went his shield as he sprang onto the ice, shouting, "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the Victor's crown!"

Plunkett is minister of music and adults at Clarksdale Church.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Ultimate preparation

Mark 14:1-72

By Dee McDermitt

We are moving closer toward the end of the last week of Jesus' life on this earth in these passages. Jesus is preparing to face the cross while the priests and teachers of the law are preparing to kill him. Mary prepares him for his burial, and Jesus prepares the disciples for his appearance to them after his resurrection.

All this is done with two interwoven themes of love and hate. The priests' hatred of him is a black brush stroke on the backdrop of Mary's love for him. And Judas' enmity against Jesus is garishly dis-

played against the backdrop of Jesus' love for his disciples as shown at the Passover meal.

Preparation for burial (vv. 3-9). This is a tender account of Mary's love for Jesus, a picture of sacrificial love. Mary broke the jar in order to get every drop of this expensive perfume which some said could have been sold for three hundred denarii. This was about a year's wages. John's gospel says that Judas, with his practical mind, was the instigator of the reprimand to her. In his eyes this lavish act was a tremendous waste, but there is



McDermitt

the beauty of it. She held nothing back. Jesus rebuked them and said that she had done what she could.

God knows that we can't do everything but we can do what we can and bring it to him. He can take our loaves and fishes and feed thousands. He can take our water and turn it into wine.

Jesus also said that Mary was anointing him for burial. Jesus had told the disciples many times that he was going to die. They didn't get it, but somehow Mary did, and she longed to perform some act of service for him. She seized the opportunity and Jesus knew it. This must have been a wonderful comfort to him for her to understand what was happening and minister to him.

Preparation for reunion (vv.

27-28). Prior to this passage, Jesus and his disciples had eaten the Passover meal, Judas left them and went out into the night. They then went to the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus knew all that would happen. He knew the disciples would fall away and he quoted Zechariah 13:7. Then he prepared them for the reunion in Galilee after the resurrection. He reassured the disciples that after the dark event of Golgotha, the resurrection would be glorious and he would still be there, guarding and watching, and would be with them in Galilee.

Preparation for death (vv. 32-36). The smiting that Zechariah had predicted began in the garden of Gethsemane. Deep distress filled Jesus' spirit. He left James, Peter and John and the

rest and went further into the garden by himself and fell prostrate in deep spiritual anguish.

Not many of us have been in the place in which we were so deeply troubled that we thought we might die, but Jesus was. At this point he prayed that, if possible, the cup of suffering might pass from him.

We see Jesus' humanity in this struggle, yet he cast himself on the Father and trusted him for strength to go on. To say that Jesus' only struggle was against the cross and scourging and mockery is too shallow. The cup which caused him the deepest anguish was his separation from the Father. Yet, in submission to the Father he said, "not my will, but thine."

McDermitt is a member of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Serve faithfully

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

By Carl M. White

These significant verses that teach we are Christ's ambassadors are preceded by verse 10, what scholars refer to as "the Judgment Seat of Christ." This is the teaching that as Christians, we will all stand before God to give an account of what we did for him. It is important to note, the issue here is not a person's salvation, but their deeds as a Christian. No one who appears before the Judgment Seat of Christ will miss heaven. However, the reward will depend upon deeds on Christ's behalf.

All are called to be ambassadors for Christ, but not all

are going to be equal to the task. In our lesson today, Paul describes how he intends to go about being the best ambassador for Christ he can be.

Serve sincerely (vv. 11-13). The first step is sincerity. Because of this "fear," or rather, healthy respect for the reality of the Judgment Seat of Christ, Paul sought to persuade men he was sincere about his convictions.

An old boss of mine told about a ballpoint pen salesman who made a sales pitch to a businessman. Persuaded that his company must have the new pens, the man ordered a half a gross. However, when



White

the salesman started filling out the order, the businessman changed his mind and kicked the salesman out of his office. He was selling ballpoint pens, but filled out the order with a pencil! He was not sincere.

If you will persuade others to consider Christ, you must be sincere in your commitment.

Serve with love (vv. 14-15). Along with sincerity, you must also have love. Not just any love, however. The love of self will not suffice in service of Christ. Neither will the love of success, nor the love of position. Our motivation must be the love of Christ.

Paul went so far as to say this love was the controlling factor in his life. This love is revealed in the fact that Christ died for all, so that all might live in him. We must not pick

and choose who Christ died for. The children's song expresses it well, "red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight." Jesus died and rose on the behalf of all humanity.

Serve with a new outlook (vv. 16-17). Sincerity in our convictions, with the love of Christ in control, leads to a different outlook on life. Instead of seeing people in terms of black, white; young, old; male, female; American, foreigner, we now see people as new creatures in Christ, and potential new creatures in Christ.

This is perhaps the most difficult task we face as followers of Christ. All of our lives we are taught to place people into different classifications and react to them accordingly. Paul was saying we should see people primarily in these two categories and react accordingly.

Serve as God's representative (vv. 18-21). The end result

of a life motivate by the awareness of Christ's seat of Judgment, sincere in conviction, controlled by love, and guided by a new outlook, is the ministry of reconciliation. As Henry Blackaby says in his meaningful work *Experiencing God*, we have been invited by God to join with him in his work. We are his ambassadors.

Verse 21 is perhaps one of the clearest and simplest statements of the Gospel in all of scripture. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God." There has been an eternal swap; our sin for Christ's righteousness. Jesus got what we deserved so that we might receive what he deserved. The reality of this truth ought to motivate us to share Christ with others.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

P.O. Box 27
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242
e-mail: bcvl@misnet.com

Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins
and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ
into my life. From this time
on, I want to live in a loving
relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to
them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact
a local Baptist church for
spiritual guidance.

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LAUC TMKJ QUTET ECLZ
LAUG, PAUC DU AMIU
XKVLUJ EW LAU TZC ZV
GMC, LAUC TAMXX DU
RCZP LAML K MG AU,
MCJ LAML K JZ CZLAKCB
ZV GDTUXV; FEL MT GD
VMLAUY AMLA LMEBAL
GU, K TWUMR LAUTU
LAKCBT.

QZAC UKBAL: LPUCLD-

UKBAL

Clue: Q = I

Have fun with cryptography and
exercise your Bible knowledge. A
King James Version Bible verse has
been encoded by letter substitution.
The same letter is substituted
throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial
and error. Answer to last week's puzzle:
Luke Twenty-Two: Sixty Nine.

Prof: SBC is dispensational 'success story'

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Dispensationalists who criticized 19th-century Bible scholars for placing themselves between the laity and the Bible assumed the same role in trying to explain and promote dispensationalism in America, said a church history professor at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Feb. 4.

Playing off the backlash against higher criticism's challenges of traditional Christian beliefs, proponents of dispensationalism would "always champion the rights and abilities of common people at the expense of the experts," said Timothy Weber, a professor at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, Ill., during Southwestern's Day-Higginbotham Lectures.

They argued that higher criticism put an expositor between believers and the Bible in the same way Catholicism had placed a priest between the believer and God, Weber said.

Ironically, he noted, dispensationalism is a complicated theory and the leaders, in explaining its ins and outs, were acting in the same role as higher critics or expository scholars.

In addition to attacks on higher criticism, Weber attributed the rise of dispensationalism to the Scofield Bible, Bible conferences and "solid networking" by dispensational leaders.

The Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909 with notes explaining the dispensations, became extremely important to the movement. Weber cited a 1987 survey of 461 ministers that found 41 percent cited the

Scofield Bible as having the greatest influence on their eschatology, while 33 percent listed a seminary education as the greatest influence.

Popular religious movements, such as dispensationalism, Weber said, are built on solid networking, and dispensationalist leaders knew how to recruit others and build their own educational institutions.

Beginning in 1868, Bible conferences also helped the movement to grow. While dispensationalism grew among laypeople, it remained almost undetectable in seminaries or in denominational headquarters, he said.

By the 1920s and 1930s, dispensationalism had become identified with Baptist fundamentalists and from then on gained strength. By 1985, about half of Southern Baptists who thought of themselves as conservatives were dispensationalists, making the Southern Baptist Convention the movement's "biggest success story," Weber said.

Weber estimated that 46 percent, or 13 million, of Baptists in America are dispensationalists, including 9 million Southern Baptists. Eleven million of the 13 million live south of the Mason-Dixon line, he said.

He attributed the success to dispensationalists' support of Baptist traditions, namely

the inerrancy of the Bible, its supremacy in theology, and Baptist revivalism.

The belief that Christ could return at any moment gave evangelists "another arrow in their quiver. The rapture became a very forceful tool to get sinners to contemplate their fate," Weber said.

John Nelson Darby, a 19th-century Anglican priest, is credited with being the first to teach dispensationalism, arguing that God works with humans in different ways in different eras, or dispensations, and that God first worked with Israel and then with the Christian church, Weber recounted.

For Darby, God would keep his promise to restore the Jews, but only after his work with the church is finished when Christ takes the church out of the world. After the rapture, Christ would begin his millennial reign.

Weber said dispensationalism first found a home among Northern Baptists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially among Baptist leaders such as A.J. Gordon, the "Baptist Pope of New England," I.M. Haldeman, A.C. Dixon and W.B. Riley. The South, mainly postmillennialists, began to shift when men like J.R. Graves, J. Frank Norris, T.T. Martin and Billy Graham began to impact the thinking of Baptists, Weber said.



Weber

Y2K concerns prompt changes in PK rally slate

DENVER (BP)—Y2K concerns have been cited by Promise Keepers as part of the reason for dropping plans for rallies at each state capital on Jan. 1, 2000.

"The prospect of Y2K was made clear to us by all the people looking at the state capitals and the public safety officials," Steve Chavis, a PK spokesman, told The Washington Times.

Chavis added, "There's a lot of theological baggage with Y2K that we don't want to be a part of." The Times did not report any further elaboration by Chavis.

Another PK spokesman, Steve Ruppe, told the Detroit Free Press, "People have expressed some concerns about the computer bug. While predictions of its effect change from day to day, it's something we're concerned about."

Ruppe, in a Feb. 11 interview with Baptist Press, said a more important reason for the change is "more people will be reached in home and church opportunities than would have gone to state capital events."

A larger event might tend to draw attention to itself, while smaller events might draw more attention to Christ, Ruppe said, citing a "lighthouse" emphasis for PK's Jan. 1, 2000, plans on "reaching the people who are closest to us."

"Y2K" refers to computer malfunctions or shutdowns that could interrupt various utilities, food distribution and other services from old computer pro-

grams that, if not fixed, could misinterpret dates ending in "00" as meaning 1900.

to pull out of her contract because she couldn't assure quality service."

Promise Keepers, now in its ninth year, has scheduled 15 men's conferences this year, beginning June 4-5 in Memphis, Tenn., with the theme, "Choose This Day," from Joshua 24:15.

Other cities and dates are: Detroit, June 25-26; Indianapolis, July 9-10; Denver,

July 16-17; Philadelphia, July 23-24; Tacoma, Wash., July 30-31; San Antonio, Aug. 6-7; Charlotte, N.C., Aug. 13-14; Hartford, Conn., Aug. 20-21; Stockton, Calif., Sept. 10-11; Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 24-25; East Rutherford, N.J., Oct. 1-2; St. Petersburg, Fla., Oct. 8-9; Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 15-16; and Phoenix, Ariz., Oct. 22-23.

The PK conference registration number, which opens Feb. 22, is 1-800-888-7595; Spanish, 1-800-203-1564.



In The Washington Times article, Chavis also had cited, as reasons for the change in Promise Keeper's plans, the logistical challenge of men traveling hundreds of miles to their state capitals and the cost of a national satellite hookup for the 50-state event. As late as October, however, PK founder Bill McCartney had said the state capital rallies were still planned. The Times reported, noting the change appeared on PK's Internet site in early February.

PK joins InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in publicly shifting a major event away from the turn of the millennium.

InterVarsity has postponed its highly attended Urbana missions conference for college students for a year, from Dec. 27-31, 1999, to the same dates in the year 2000. The Urbana conference traditionally has been held every three years, drawing about 20,000 students and others. According to a report in Religion News Service, "Ministry officials cited several reasons, including 'many unknown variables' concerning the Y2K computer glitch and the decision by the person coordinating travel to the event

First-time message



What's it like to hear for the first time about a God who loves you? This group of people in Mongolia strain to hear as a church member explains the gospel to them. Most of them had never heard any such message. More than 4,500 Southern Baptist missionaries are working among 538 people groups in 127 countries to share the good news of God's love with people living in spiritual darkness. (IMB photo by Charles Ledford)